

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 were pending and presented for examination and in this application. In an Office Action dated January 16, 2007, claim 23 was allowed, claims 6, 7, 11, 17 and 18 were objected to, and claims 1-5, 8-10, 12-16 and 19-22 were rejected. Claims 1-5, 12-16, 21 and 22 are canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. No new claims have been added. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 6-11 and 17-20 is respectfully requested.

Response to Double Patenting Rejection

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5, 8-10, 12-16 and 19-22 as allegedly being unpatentable on the ground of obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1-18 of U.S. Patent No. 6,633,835 (“the ‘835 patent”). This rejection is now traversed.

Claims 1-5 have been canceled, thereby overcoming this rejection.

Claims 8-10 have been amended to depend from claim 6, which the Examiner has indicated is patentably distinct from claims 1-18 of the ‘835 patent.

Claims 12-16 have been canceled, thereby overcoming this rejection.

Claims 18-20 have been amended to depend from claim 17, which the Examiner has indicated is patentably distinct from claims 1-18 of the ‘835 patent.

Claims 21 and 22 have been canceled, thereby overcoming this rejection.

Thus, claims 8-10 and 18-20, as amended, are directed to inventions that are patentably distinct from claims 1-18 of the ‘835 patent. Therefore, this obviousness-type double patenting rejection is overcome.

Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §103

Claims 1-4, 12-15 and 21-22 were rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0002438 to Yazaki et al. (“Yazaki”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,993,604 to Dixon (“Dixon”).

Claims 1-4, 12-15 and 21-22 are hereby canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, merely to expedite the prosecution of this application. Hence, this rejection is overcome.

Claims 5, 8-9, 16 and 19-20 were rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Yazaki in view of Dixon in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,912,225 to Kohzuki et al. (“Kohzuki”).

Claims 5 and 16 are hereby canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, merely to expedite the prosecution of this application. Hence, this rejection is overcome.

Claims 8-9 have been amended to depend from claim 6, which has been amended to be in independent form including all the limitations of its base claim 1 and intervening claims 2-5. As Examiner indicated that claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, claims 8-9 as amended now depend from an allowable independent claim.

Claims 19-20 have been amended to depend from claim 17, which has been amended to be in independent form including all the limitations of its base claim 12 and intervening claims 13-16. As Examiner indicated that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, claims 19-20 as amended now depend from an allowable independent claim.

Hence, claims 8-9 and 19-20 as amended are patentably distinct over the cited references, both alone and in combination.

Claim 10 has been rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Yazaki in view of Dixon in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,023,454 to Deroux-Dauphin et al. (“Deroux”).

Claim 10 has been amended to depend from claim 6, which has been amended to be in independent form including all the limitations of its base claim 1 and intervening claims 2-5. As Examiner indicated that claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, claim 10 as amended now depends from an allowable independent claim.

Hence, claim 10 as amended is patentably distinct over the cited references, both alone and in combination.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objected to claims 6, 7, 11, 17 and 18 as being dependent from a rejected base claim, but indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 6 is hereby amended merely to be rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of its base claim 1 and intervening claims 2-5. Amended claims 7 and 11 now depend from independent claim 6 as amended.

Claim 17 is hereby amended merely to be rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of its base claim 12 and intervening claims 13-16. Amended claim 18 now depends from independent claim 17 as amended.

Since claims 6, 7, 11, 17 and 18 as amended no longer depend from a rejected base claim, these claims should be allowable.

Further, Claims 7-10 have been amended to depend from independent claim 6 as amended. Claims 19 and 20 have been amended to depend from independent claim 17 as amended. Hence, amended claims 7-10, 19 and 20 depend from allowable independent claims and should also be allowable.

Conclusion

In sum, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 6-11 and 17-20, as presented herein, are in condition for allowance. Favorable action is solicited

Respectfully Submitted,
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